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SUBJECT: SECRETARY CLINTON INTERVIEW WITH PALESTINIAN YOUTH TV
GARNERS RECORD NUMBER OF VIEWERS

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: A record number of Palestinian viewers tuned into the March 8 airing of the Palestinian Youth television program, "Ali Soutik", to see the program's interview with Secretary Clinton. Popular reaction was overwhelmingly positive to the interview, which was taped during the Secretary's March 4 visit to Ramallah and included questions about the Secretary's meeting with Palestinian English language students and her policy goals for the region. Young viewers, in particular, said the Secretary exhibited a welcome understanding of the challenges in their daily lives. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) According to Palestinian TV, more than 1.2 million people tuned into watch a March 8 episode of "Ali Soutik" ("Raise Your Voice") featuring an exclusive interview with Secretary Clinton. The interview was taped during the Secretary's visit to Ramallah on March 4. During the interview, which followed her meeting with Palestinian students in the Access English Language, the interviewers asked the Secretary about her interactions with the Palestinian students and her support for such education programs, as well as her policy priorities for the region and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The interviewers also asked the Secretary what advice, as a mother, she would give to Palestinian youth.

¶3. (SBU) Ms. Hania Bitar, director of the NGO PYALARA, which produces "Ali Soutik", said they have received overwhelmingly positive feedback since the interview aired. Ms. Bitar characterized the interview as a major success in reaching out to Palestinian youth, addressing their issues, and giving them hope for a better future. Ms. Bitar said many of the youth with whom she works were particularly inspired by Secretary Clinton's remarks as a mother. They felt she demonstrated a genuine understanding of some of the issues and challenges they face as Palestinian youth.

¶4. (SBU) Ms. Bitar noted the public viewed the interview in very positive terms. "You cannot believe the phone calls we received, the emails ... everyone is talking about the [opportunity] Mrs. Clinton has given to Palestinian youth," Ms. Bitar told PD chief. Ms. Bitar, who can be a critical judge of USG policy actions, added, "I strongly believe that this [will] keep the torch of hope burning until a breakthrough is achieved on [the] ground... The Secretary of State spoke with great conviction. She is very persuasive." Ms. Bitar said she was told both President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad watched the program.

¶5. (U) "Ali Soutik" typically attracts roughly 500,000 viewers to its weekly program. For several days prior to the March 8 show, PYALARA ran ads in the local newspapers and television spots advertising the show and the special feature with Secretary Clinton.

WALLES